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ISSUE 129 | June 2015

A GREAT LOSS TO OUR COMMUNITY

Val Smith with husband Andrew Smith.

BY SARAH EDWARDS

BLACKBIRD LEYS councillor Val Smith, who has died after a long illness, helped thousands of local people throughout her political career and has been described as a true champion for Blackbird Leys.

Val was passionate about the Leys and the people who live and work here, and was a great supporter of community groups and organisations across the estate, including Leys News.

Tributes have poured in from local people praising Val's determination and passion to help others.

Val was a kind, compassionate and hardworking councillor, who had an intrinsic understanding of local people and the issues and challenges that they face. She was held in high regard and affection by fellow councillors, council staff and local community organisations, as well as the people she served on the Leys.

Val's husband, Andrew Smith MP said: "I have lost the most wonderful loving wife who has been my rock and inspiration, and our family a devoted mother and grandmother. Val brought so much joy to all who knew her, helped so many people and worked tirelessly for the community she loved. We will miss her so much."

Friend and former colleague Val Churchill said: "Val Smith was an exceptionally hardworking councillor who cared desperately about the local community where she worked and lived. Val put one hundred percent into everything she did for the good of others, and would never take no for an answer or give up without a fight. She just saw the good in everyone and was always ready to take up the plight of anyone who fell on hard times or who needed help, advice or a friendly chat.

"Val is going to be sadly missed by so many people I am proud to have called Val a colleague, former boss and most importantly a friend."

Jill Hudson, Head of the Blackbird Academy Trust added: "Val is simply irreplaceable. She believed in the children of Blackbird Leys and believed in the schools, working tirelessly to help both in any way she could. She had a vision of the three schools working together and through her determination that is now becoming a reality. She made such a difference to so many through her dedication and the example of service to, and care of, others that she so selflessly modelled in her own life.

"With Val though, it was the way she did all this that was the extra special element. There was nothing stuffy about Val, she had such a wicked laugh, a fabulous smile that lit up any meeting and a common sense that cut through everything. Setbacks or tricky issues didn't daunt her and her sense of fun kept everything in perspective. For eighteen years she has been, and will always be, a real inspiration to me and to many, many others."

Reflecting on Val's support of the parish council, Blackbird Leys Parish Council Chairman Gordon Roper said: "It is a great loss to the estate. Val really was Mrs Blackbird Leys. I met her many years ago and we lived just across the road from each other.

"I have great respect for the way she went about her council business and she taught me and advised me about a lot of things. I went to see her often and we would have a cup of tea and a good chatter and put the world to rights. Val was a good friend. She fought so hard for the people of Blackbird Leys and I will really miss her. Val talked a lot of sense and I really enjoyed being in meetings with her."

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BLAP GARDEN GETS KICK START

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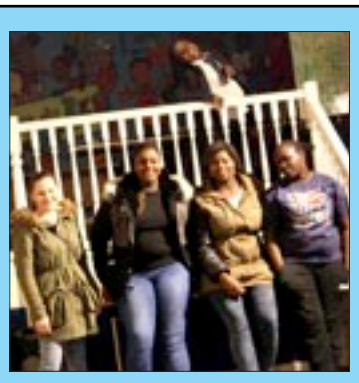

GIRLS RULE!

Empowerment of the girls has taken over on Blackbird Leys. Find out why on centre page

WIN FOR BLACKBIRDS

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Leys News

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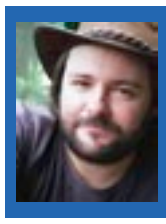

THE WILDLIFE GARDEN

With Stuart Mabbutt

Phenology

'PHENOLOGY' is rife in wildlife gardens at this time of the year, it's the study of the season cycles of insects, plants, animals, in fact all wildlife. During spring, I often watch the sequence of events that indicate the accelerating march towards the summer season.

It can be indicated by the birds – the first Warblers, Swallow, Cuckoo and the first Swift, often in that order. Turtle Dove could have one been added to that spectacular list but few of us have that privilege nowadays.

Butterflies signal the seasons too so keep your eyes peeled for the different types around as the months advance.

Various types of blossom rush through most quickly during spring which is followed weekly by different flowers opening.

It's always interesting to keep a notebook of the dates you first see certain things appear, and compare those dates year on year. The mind pulls tricks on us and we often feel things are happening earlier year on year. When you compare these notes often things are shown to be getting earlier, very often by just a few days though, not weeks earlier as our memories tell us.

I don't trust the accuracy of my own mind, but if you don't believe me, why not take up the study of Phenology yourself and see what you find.

Templars Square to support local hospice

SOBELL House Hospice in Oxford has been chosen by Templars Square Shopping Centre as its Charity of the Year for 2015. The east Oxford shopping centre has committed to raising £10,000 over the coming months, by carrying out fundraising events throughout the year.

Centre Manager Paul Bentham said: "We wanted to lend our support to a local charity which would resonate with our employees, tenants and visitors alike and we didn't need to look far to choose Sobell House. The holistic care they offer to patients and their families is extraordinary and we hope to be able to raise funds to help them continue their special brand of care and support to those with terminal illnesses."

Kelly Houghton from Sobell House added: " We are delighted to have been chosen by Templars Square to benefit from their charitable support this year. We care for around 3,000 people every year in the Hospice, which has an 18-bed inpatient unit providing care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In addition, we have a team of 15 specialist community nurses providing care in people's homes and our palliative care nurses provide support on the wards at local Oxfordshire hospitals.

"We need to raise £4,300 every day to cover the £4 million a year it costs to run the Hospice. This would not be possible without the support of local organisations like Templars Square."

Have you signed up to Thames Valley Alert yet?

Thames Valley ALERT

THAMES Valley Police is encouraging you, your neighbours, friends and colleagues to register for Thames Valley Alert, our community messaging system. Registering to receive messages from Thames Valley Alert offers you the opportunity to receive localised crime and safety alerts for your local neighbourhood via email, voice or text.

To sign up, you just need to visit www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk and click on 'Join' and follow the on-screen instructions. To receive messages by voice mail call 01865 335133

You can choose to receive different types of messages, such as burglary alerts, suspicious circumstances or good news, and select the priority level which keeps you in control to receive alerts which are relevant to you.

Once you are signed up to Thames Valley Alert, you can log in to your account and amend your message settings, contact details and alerting areas as well as setting up a local neighbourhood scheme.

Multiple alerting areas give you the opportunity to receive alerts from other neighbourhoods which are relevant to you. You may set one up for your home address, another for where you work and a third one for where your family or friends live so that you are kept informed about crime in the areas.

www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk **01865 335133**

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A great loss to our community

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Val and Andrew Smith at the opening of the Blackbird Leys The Co-operative Childcare day nursery.

BALFOUR Road resident Brian Lester added: "Val Smith was the champion for those who lived in Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys, her work ethics throughout her political life, both as City Councillor and County Councillor will never be matched. As a friend she will be missed I was so glad to have worked with her. I shall miss her."

Val was a great supporter of services and facilities for children and families. Sue Price from the Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground said: "Val Smith was a good friend to BLAP. She trusted and believed in us and was very supportive from early days and when we re-opened in 2012. Her support meant so much to us and she encouraged us with financial help and advice, by taking a keen interest in the detail of what we were doing. We will miss her and are so grateful for her being such an approachable and wonderful human being. So many families whose children enjoy themselves at BLAP have been helped in a variety of ways in their daily lives on Blackbird Leys thanks to Val."

Oxford City Council Locality Officer Phil Jones added: "Val had a genuine interest in helping to improve the lives of local people, she had no time for prevarication or nonsense and wanted to get on with doing things that made a real difference."

LOCAL HERO

Ines Kretzschmar from the Leys CDI said: "Val was a true local hero who gave tremendous support to the CDI, youth project and Clockhouse project. Her enthusiasm, dedication and courage will be missed by us all."

Reverend Heather Carter from the Church of the Holy Family added: "My contact with Val was through us both being trustees of the Alice Smith fund, for the needs of the poor of the parish and the Sarah Nowell Educational fund. Val was tireless in her search for ways to ease the burdens for people on Blackbird Leys, particularly children. She spent much time at the Children's Centre helping young families and also with schools enabling the school band to flourish. Val was a lovely colleague, nothing was ever too much trouble, with a lovely sense of presence and humour at all our meetings. She will be sadly missed, particularly by all who knew her, and valued her friendship and collegial wisdom but by those for whom because of her generosity of spirit, their lives have been made somewhat easier."

Fellow councillor and friend Scott Seamons added: "I worked with Val for six years. She helped a great many people with a variety of problems and there has always been a mutual warmth between Val and the community.

"Val could in some ways be a nightmare to canvass with, while the rest of us would cover many doorsteps, Val would be captured in conversation at just one or two. People felt able to open up to Val about the difficulties they were facing because they trusted and liked her; or they wanted to catch up with her, share stories of how their children were doing now they'd left home, or thank her for help in the past.

"Many friends have talked about Val's dedication and concern for those in poverty or threatened with homelessness, but it is more than that. While many can offer sympathy, Val was able to offer empathy. Val had known, and grown up in hardship, she was able to connect with people because she understood their problems rather than just feeling compassion. That goes to the heart of why people saw her as much more than a politician.

"The impact Val had on our area is everywhere, from the homes that many of us live in, including myself, to the health centre or football pavilion. Adopted herself, she championed issues of foster care on the County Council, and was always especially keen on issues concerning children and young people. Val will also continue to have an impact on our community long into the future, as she started the ideas and processes behind forthcoming district centre regeneration and the tower block refurbishment.

"I met Val when I was 20 years old: young and impressionable. She was a joy to spend time with, able to see the funny side in all circumstances, she was a passionate advocate for her values and those of her community, and had always championed the best for Blackbird Leys. In these respects she was the best kind of public servant and I absolutely relished the opportunity to join her team of councillors on the Leys. Alongside colleagues Steve Curran and Rae Humberstone, Val was a mentor to all of us, despite our varied backgrounds. She taught me perhaps more than anyone else about politics, our community but above all about people. I am blessed just to have known her, and more to call her a friend. It is a relationship I will forever treasure."

COUNTY COUNCILOR

Val first became a city councillor for Blackbird Leys in 1987, but stood down in 2005 for three years after becoming frustrated with the city council's lack of power. When she resigned from the city council she joined the county council, representing The Leys and focusing on education and children's services. In her time as a politician she also served as Lord Mayor of Oxford and the county council's vice-chairwoman. Val would have taken up the post as Chair this year.

Val had lived in Oxford since her teens, having been dropped off here when hitchhiking from Manchester to Bournemouth where she was planning to work in a café. She loved the city so much she decided to stay. She met Andrew while he was a student at Oxford, and they married in 1976, moving to Flaxfield Road on the estate in 1979. They have a son, Luke, and a granddaughter Mirai, 17.

Val died on May 15 at the Sobell House Hospice in Headington, after a long battle with cancer. Her funeral was due to take place today, (Tuesday May 26) as Leys News was published. The service was to be held at the Church of the Holy Family, Blackbird Leys. Donations please to Action on Bladder Cancer c/o The Co-operative Funeralcare, 71 Balfour Road, Oxford OX4 6AG.

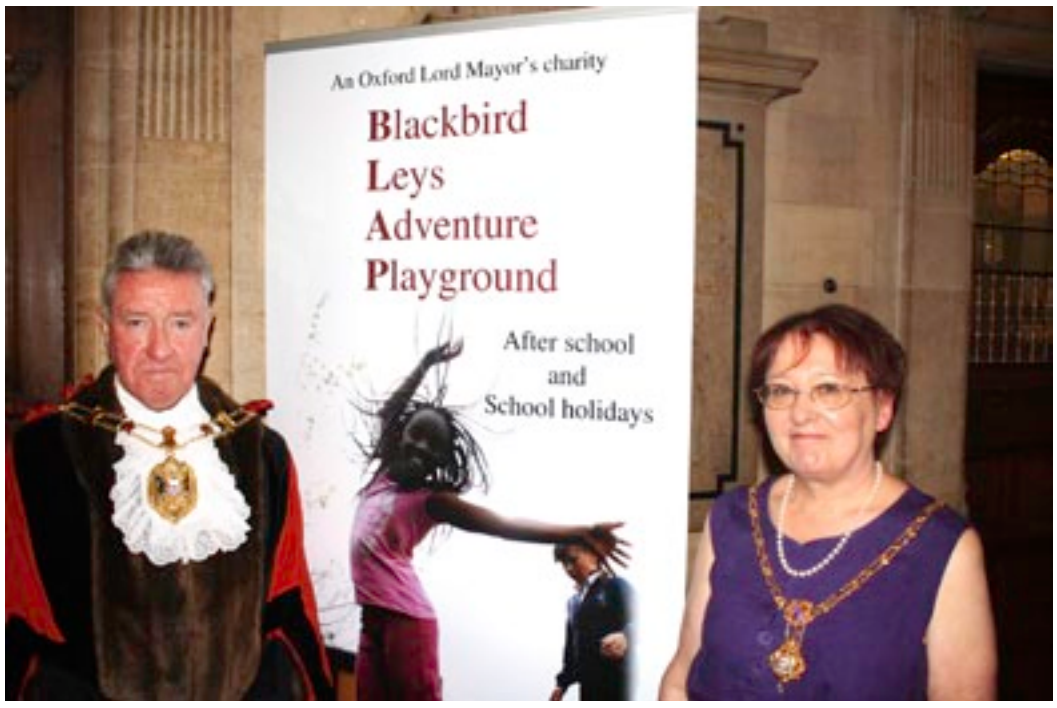
New mayor dedicates his year to Val Smith

THE newly elected Lord Mayor Rae Humberstone and wife Bev, the Lady Mayoress, (*pictured*) after his election last week. Rae and Bev have lived on the Leys for many years and Rae has represented Blackbird Leys as a city councillor since 2005.

In Rae's acceptance speech he dedicated his year to Val Smith.

BLAP is one of the Lord Mayor's three charities for the year.

Sue Price from BLAP said: "We are delighted and also pleased to have received a £10,000 grant from Children in Need. We are still keen to attract more funding so we can increase our staffing level and provide an even better service to the many children who attend after school and during the school holidays."



LEYS BEAUTY

BY NATALIE GIDLEY

COMPETITION: WIN a Summer bumper fashion and beauty prize worth over £120!

IT'S TIME to get ready for summer and this month I've gathered some great products from some of my favourite brands to primp and pamper you from head to toe. The best part is, you could win the whole lot!

BareFoot Foot Scrub, Foot Balm and Foot Lotion, £4.25 each, Superdrug
With 'sandal season' almost upon us, it's time to get feet in flip-flop-fit condition, and what better way than with Bare Foot's range of creams, soaks, scrubs and balms. Each product is infused with natural botanical extracts to make feet feel and smell fabulous. They are available exclusively in Superdrug stores nationwide and online via www.superdrug.com for £4.25 each.

Scholl Luxury Pedicure Set, £29.99, exclusive to Superdrug
The Scholl Velvet Smooth Express Pedi foot file will gently buff away hard skin in minutes and leave your feet feeling super smooth. This set also comes with the Scholl Velvet Smooth Intense Serum which contains ingredients known for their ability to retain water and maintain moisture balance. The perfect set for a perfect feet treat! You'll also receive Superdrug's own brand of Exfoliating Foot Scrub which contains jojoba seed oil and aloe vera (£3.49) to perfectly compliment the treatment!

Andrew Barton Moroccan Argan Oil Bristle Release brush, £8, ASDA
This two in one product is perfect for packing in your holiday suitcase. Moroccan Argan Oil is perfect for keeping hair in tip-top condition in the heat; it moisturises, de-frizzes and promotes healthy hair growth – what's not to love? The bristles contain the moisturising Argan Oil and it's released into the hair as you brush!

M:UK Preppy Sunglasses, £14.99, Superdrug
Superdrug offers a new range of stylish sunglasses that don't only look great but also protect your eyes this summer. We can give away a pair of the M:UK Preppy round tort sunglasses – £14.99

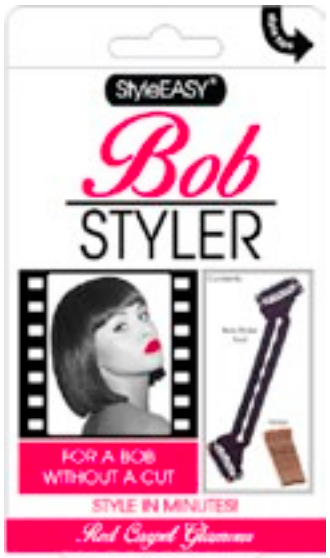
StyleEASY hair styling kits, prices range from £3 to £4, ASDA
If you love creating Hollywood glamour hair but lack the skills or the funds for an A-list hair stylist, I promise you will love these hair styling kits from StyleEASY. You can create maxi-buns, a bob, intricate plaits, voluminous beehives and loads more. I'm giving away a chic bob-styler, plait styler, a super maxi bun donut and the classic bun-styler.

Palmer's Cocoa Butter Formula skin care
Palmer's Cocoa Butter Formula skin care has become a huge cult beauty classic thanks to its effective ingredients which relieve dry skin, improve the appearance of skin imperfections like scars and stretch marks and its bargain price tag. Oh, and these products happen to smell amazing too.

It's important to look after your skin in hot weather as well as cold and Palmer's has a product for everything. Each contains vitamin E which helps to give an even and toned appearance to the skin. The prize includes Skin Therapy Oil Spray with Rosehip fragrance (£9.99), Skin Therapy Oil (£9.99) and the Cocoa Butter Lotion (£3.99).

Canvas 'Oh I do like to be beside the seaside' tote, £13, Alphabet Bags
With all of this incredible new stuff, you'll need a cute bag to carry it all away in. I've been a fan of Alphabet Bags for a while now with their witty slogans and penchant for trendy typography on everything from tablet cases to wash bags. You'll definitely be a fan too!

Me and Earl and the Dying Girl, by Jesse Andrews, £7.99, Allen and Unwin
If you don't usually get the chance to wind down with a good book, summer is definitely the time to do so. Don't be put off by the title, this book is actually a comedy written in the words of the main character Greg Gaines, a socially awkward, self-deprecating teen who is forced by his mother to befriend Rachel, his childhood friend who has been diagnosed with leukemia. You'll be ahead of the curve with this one too as its film adaptation is due for release in September.



TO ENTER THE COMPETITION:
You can enter the competition via my Twitter page (@Shoe_Floozie) or my Facebook page (Facebook.com/ShoeFloozie) – or both to double your chances of winning!

All you have to do is look out for my Facebook post or Tweet about my competition and do both of the following:

- **Like Shoe Floozie on Facebook or Follow Shoe Floozie on Twitter**

AND

- **Re-tweet or share the Shoe Floozie #SFSummerComp post**

The competition will close on the 6 July at 11.59pm and is open to UK residents only. There will be one winner who will be selected at random. The winner will be notified via their Twitter or Facebook account that they entered the competition via.

BY SGT MARK BROCK
FROM THE LEYS NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM

Dealing with disability hate crime

ADDRESSING the fear of reporting disability hate crime and repeat victimisation were on the agenda at a Thames Valley Police conference at the Kassam Stadium.

The importance of removing barriers to justice for disabled people was also highlighted. The aim of the conference was to understand disability hate crime, and to respond to it in partnership.

The event highlighted the need to tackle this crime as many vulnerable people consider it inevitable and a fact of life.

Assistant Chief Constable Alan Baldwin said: "Disability hate crime is often hidden, and under-reported due to the fear of reporting the crime, or the belief that the authorities will do little to help victims.

"We need to understand disability hate crime, in order to protect the most vulnerable people in society."

Disability hate crime is any crime or incident whereby the victim believes that they have been targeted because they have a disability (physical, sensory, learning disability or mental health). These incidents can include, but aren't limited to, name-calling, verbal abuse, criminal damage to property and doing anything to make the victim feel unsafe.

These incidents can be reported by friends, family, co-workers and carers as well as the victims themselves and witnesses.

If you or someone you know is being mistreated or targeted because they have a disability, or you witness something like this in public, call Thames Valley Police on 101.

We know hate crime can have an impact on victims which can sometimes reduce the victim to living in fear of the perpetrator. Because of this, or any other reason, victims and witnesses may feel unable to speak to the police.

Stop Hate UK is an independent charity who can take confidential reports of hate crimes and give advice to the caller.

True Vision is an organisation owned by ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) who can offer advice about different kinds of hate crime, including disability hate and where to find support and guidance.

You can also report incidents of hate crime to True Vision using their online reporting form.

■ **You can contact True Vision via enquiries@report-it.org.uk.**

BLAP Garden given kick start

Photo by Russell Price.

CHILDREN and young people at Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground (BLAP) were delighted to be given two compost bins during the Easter playscheme. These were given by Monique from The Conservation Volunteers to help kick start BLAP's gardening project. The project aims to turn part of the back area into a beautiful landscaped garden with flowers, vegetables and places to sit and relax and have a picnic.

The project is in the early stages at the moment. BLAP would love to hear from anyone who can help them garden or make tables and benches out of pallets. They would also be grateful for any old paving stones so that they can create a path for wheelchair users.

BLAP is open each day after school for 8–13 year olds from 3–5.30pm. The cost is £1.50 per session. During the half term BLAP opens on 26–29 May, from 10am–4pm, with an option of 9am–5pm for those needing the extra hours because of working parents. Sessions cost £5 or £7. There will be lots of activities and visits to the IT Hub, the swimming pool and the music studios to record songs.

BLAP re-opened three years ago, and is always on the look out for people who would like to be part of our team of volunteers and helpers.

■ **If you can help in any way by donating your time or any gardening resources or if you are interested in your children attending BLAP please contact Joey or Sue from the Blackbird Ley's Adventure Playground on 01865 236646.**

Benefit fraud

A WOMAN from Blackbird Leys pleaded guilty to benefit fraud offences totalling more than £85,000.

Ms Veronica Knibbs of Nightingale Avenue was sentenced to a 12 month Community Order at Oxford Magistrates, after the court heard that she had received over £56,000 in Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, in addition to deposits of up to £18,200 which were made into Ms Knibbs' bank account.

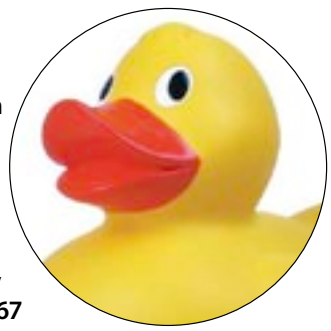
She had made false statements to Oxford City Council and West Oxfordshire District Council about her personal savings between June 2000 to May 2014, and had earned a total of £85,294 as a result.

Ms Knibbs has now been ordered to complete 150 hours of unpaid community work, and must also pay a total of £77,335 with an additional cost of £4,304. This will cover compensation for Oxford City Council and West Oxfordshire District Council, as well as prosecution costs for Oxford City Council. If the money is not paid, Ms Knibbs could face two years in prison.

Speaking about the case, Scott Warner, the Investigations Manager for Oxford City Council said: "Fraudulent acts against the Council will simply not be tolerated. We have a duty to protect the public purse from abuse."

Jackie Yates, the Executive Director for Organisational Development and Corporate Services at Oxford City Council said: "Residents and stakeholders of Oxford City have a right to expect that public funds are secure and handled honestly. To that end, the City Council will pursue all perpetrators of fraud and make sure they're brought to book."

COMPETITION WINNERS



THE winners of last month's Count the Ducks Competition are Jack, age 11 from Blackbird Leys, and David, age 8, from Oxford. They both gave us the correct number of ducks, which is 14, and they each win a fantastic 67 piece art and craft set.

There is no children's competition for this issue, but look out for our brand new Spot the Difference Competition next month.

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For Parish Council information please call 01865 716943 or go to www.leysonline.net

LEYS MUM

An alternative look at parenting with **Lauraine Dineen**

Potty training

I DO NOT mean to brag but after successfully potty training Harry and George I consider myself the expert of the world.

When I tell people my youngest is now potty trained the first thing people say is, "Oh! It is always easier with the second one because they learn by watching the older one!"

And I call this absolute rubbish. If left to their own devices I promise you our children would still be wearing nappies to job interviews. And I cannot say I blame them.

My eldest is potty trained because of my mad, bad ass Mum skills, because of the 12 months I spent trying to learn how to potty train, when I read every single book, every single internet article, and asked every person I saw in Tesco with children for potty training advice.

All of that combined with my own superior intellect, obviously. Which I will share with you now.

1. Before you even think about beginning. . . if you take mood altering medications (and who does not these days), make sure you have enough on hand to take about five times your normal amount for a few weeks.

If you drink, stock way up on your alcohol of choice.

2. If you don't drink, start.

3. Look for signs that they are ready. Do they understand the value of a pound? Know what the word 'bribe' means?

And, if things start going wrong and you have to use negative reinforcement, do they understand what it is really like to live without Mummy?

4. Come to peace with the knowledge that everything in your house will be covered in what was previously safely contained in a nappy. Your stuff is going to get gross. REALLY GROSS.

And sometimes it is going to touch your fingers or your arm or in my husband's case your face. Once I walked into my front room to find my three-year-old stranded on the dinner table, unable to move, crouched in a pool of his own urine. Did I mention it was ON MY DINNER TABLE? You know, the place where I eat food, ON MY DINNER TABLE?

5. Incentives like chocolate buttons and jelly tots are really helpful in getting your toddler to sit on the toilet. So are handcuffs.

6. Do not get discouraged if, after sitting on the toilet long enough to have a permanent rainbow indentation across his bottom, your child immediately wees and/or poos on the floor outside the bathroom. Do not worry – he has actually been possessed by a demon. It is totally normal.

Remember as you strap him to his potty chair and throw holy water on him that it is not your child.

7. Abandon all dignity and put a potty in your car. Actually, I wish I had thought of this years ago. Public toilets are nasty. Rest stops are filled with kidnappers. Go on your own terms, in your own car. Then toss it out the window and let it be someone else's problem.

8. I read several articles where people suggested putting Cheerios in the toilet and making a game out of trying to hit them with urine. But after a few attempts on my own I realised this only works for boys. Or girls who have a tough road ahead of them in the school changing rooms.

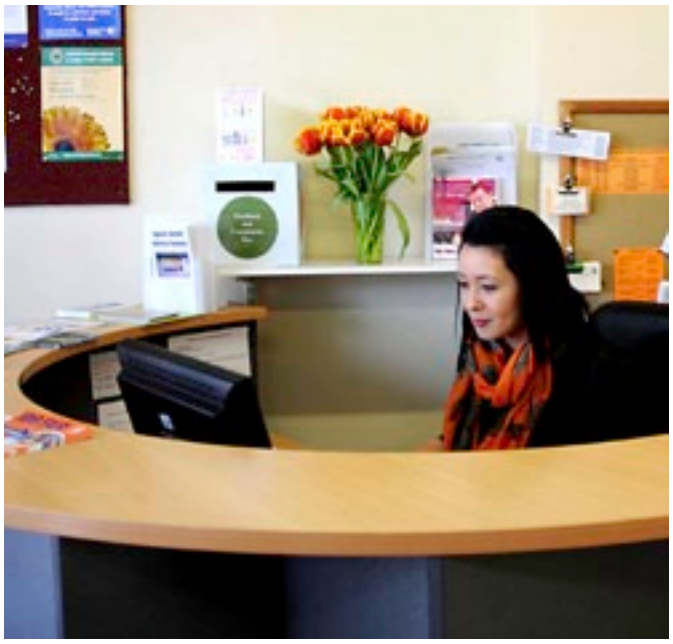
9. Screaming, "What is your problem? Just wee in the toilet. Please. I am begging you. From the bottom of my soul. Just once. It has been seven days and I die a little on the inside every time I scrub wee out of the carpet. Please. Please!" does not help.

10. If all else fails, send him to school and let his teachers deal with it. That is why they get paid the big bucks right?

Good luck to you and just remember – if you screw this up, they will probably be scarred for life.

AGNES SMITH ADVICE CENTRE

Volunteer opportunity at Agnes Smith Advice Centre



IF YOU have ever received advice from us or know someone who has, you will be aware of how valuable our service is.

In order to be able to help more people we are looking for volunteers to train with us as advisers. You might have some free time and want to give something to your community. Or maybe, you are looking to get back to work and want to improve your skills or broaden your work experience.

Either way this could be the right opportunity for you to get involved and make a difference.

We are an independent advice centre serving the Blackbird Leys community. We offer free advice on welfare benefits, debt, housing and employment. With four drop in sessions a week we aim to give everyone the chance to get immediate assistance with whatever issue is troubling them.

Volunteers do not need to have experience of advice work, just a commitment to being welcoming to all and non-judgmental. Initially you will be sitting in on drop in sessions and helping advisers with their casework. We will provide training to get you started and as soon as you are confident we will support you seeing clients and building up your knowledge of the main advice areas.

We are a small, friendly team of staff and volunteers. Come and meet us to find out more about what we do. You could shadow for a morning drop in session to get a taste of what volunteering would involve.

We are asking for a commitment of 10 hours a week. However, if you would like to join us but do not have this amount of time to offer do get in touch and we may be able to work out a more flexible arrangement.

If you would like to volunteer as an adviser please drop by to pick up an application form or else you can download it from our website www.agnessmith.co.uk.

■ **Agnes Smith Advice Centre, 96 Blackbird Leys Road, Oxford. Telephone 01865 770206**

Blackbird Leys Parish Council

Next Meeting Date:

Tuesday 30 June, 7pm,
in the Jack Argent Room, BBL Community Centre.

Parish Councillors

Gordon Roper (Chair), Ann Booker (Vice Chair), Chris Hatton, Daniel Jones, Jadine-Francis Kennedy, Sheila Smith and Pat Stannard.

For further details telephone

(9am–5pm) 07754 271831

Send email to

bblparishcouncil@gmail.com

For further details of Parish Council news, meetings, minutes and other activities in Blackbird Leys please go to the community website:

www.leysonline.net

Girls rule! Empowerment of the girls has taken over on Blackbird Leys

WRITTEN BY BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND PROJECT

YOUNG women from Blackbird Leys have been attending a project at the CDI youth project called Battlefield of the Mind, and have been exploring various aspects of their lives as young women in today's ever changing society.

A lot of young woman say that the project is really fun and welcoming. One young woman said: "I like that everyone gets their say and that the staff always try their best to follow up any suggestions" and another added: "I like to get out of the house more and the project has made me more content within myself."

Although the project is leaping from strength to strength and can only become stronger, the young women have expressed their desire to increase the amount of fun activities to their already bursting agenda.

Destini Anthony, 12, said: "The project is really fun, because we get to have chill out sessions and sessions which make us realise that as women we can do anything we want." Many of the young women within the project have shared how their confidence has grown throughout the project. They have also expressed how they have made friends for life with people who they may not see on a regular basis.

Overall, it is clear to see that the project is on a roll and showing no signs of stopping. Empowering young women in this ever changing modern society is giving our future generation of women the chance to make their voices to be heard and this is their time to shine.

■ We would like to thank Catalyst Gateway for the funding to make this happen. This project runs every Thursday 4.15 – 7pm if you would like to take part we are based at Blackbird Leys Community Centre or contact the CDI team on 01865 395927 for further information.

Call for outgoing students to donate unwanted goods to raise money for charity

OUTGOING students are being encouraged to recycle unwanted household goods to help raise more than £100,000 for the British Heart Foundation.

Oxford City Council has installed temporary red recycling banks for the unwanted items at locations throughout the city.

People can donate items including good quality clothing, handbags, shoes, books, DVDs, CDs, toys and bric-a-brac.

The recycling drive targets University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University students who are returning home for the summer and are clearing out their rooms.

It not only means that fewer items go to waste, but also helps to replenish the stock at the British Heart Foundation's charity shops.

Last year the campaign, which is now in its fourth year, saw about 60 tonnes of goods recycled – raising about £100,000 for the charity. It is hoped that even more will be raised this year.

Councillor John Tanner, Board Member for Cleaner, Greener Oxford, said: "Last year the city's students recycled an incredible amount at the end of the academic year.

"This year I know that they can do even better and together we can raise even more money for the British Heart Foundation.

"The charity's work helps to save lives every day. I can think of no better way of recycling an unwanted book, DVD or item of clothing than that.

"It is a simple choice: do you want your unwanted goods to go to waste or to help save lives?"

The campaign is a joint project between the City Council, the British Heart Foundation, colleges of the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University.

Andrea Siret, Oxford Brookes University Community Relations Manager, said: "This campaign is a great example of strong partnership working. The coordinated approach enables the two universities and the City Council to ensure consistent messages and advice are provided to students in Oxford.

"We are hopeful that this exercise encourages many students to take advantage of the various ways of recycling their unwanted goods. This will assist in reducing the amount of waste left behind at the end of the academic year."

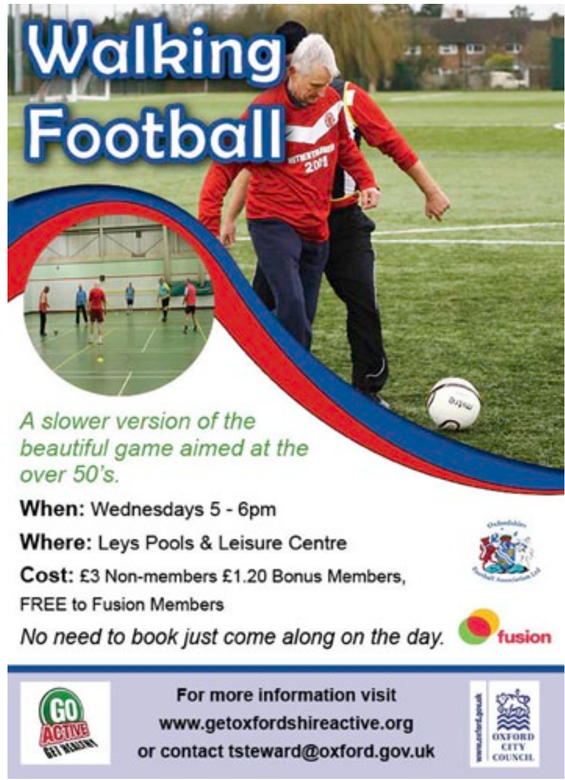
The recycling banks – which are a distinctive red in colour and were installed last week (5/5) – can be found in:

- The corner of East Avenue and Morrell Avenue
- Morrell Avenue, near the junction with Warneford Road
- The junction of Gray's Road and Old Road
- Oxford Brookes' Headington Hill campus
- Magdalen Road Church
- The corner of Marston Street and Cowley Road
- Manzil Way Gardens
- Albert Street, near the junction with Cardigan Street

Recycling banks have also been placed in Oxford Brookes' halls of residence and many University of Oxford colleges.

Oxford residents are also welcome to use the recycling banks – some of which have remained in place since last year's recycling drive due to their high usage.

■ More information about how students can give unwanted items a new lease of life – including how to reuse or recycle furniture, electrical items and even bikes – can be found at oxford.gov.uk/recycling4students.



Come along to the Leys Big Lunch!

BY JESSICA SCOINES

THE Big Lunch is an annual national event where communities get together to share lunch and have a good time. Backed by Oxford City Council, Blackbird Leys will be hosting its first Big Lunch on 7 June from 12–5pm on Blackbird Leys Field, next to the leisure centre.

Inspired by the good vibes of the summer time, the idea is that members of the community get together and each bring along some food to put on the table to later share. In return each person who donates to the table is given a raffle ticket which will be drawn later in the afternoon.

There will be local entertainment and children are welcome to come and take part too. A craft table will be available for children as well as games such as giant Jenga and Connect 4, hula hoops and space hoppers.

Leys Community Market Cafe will also be at the event offering refreshments like tea and scones for a small donation.

The Big Lunch is open to anyone and is intended to be an enjoyable, light-hearted afternoon for the community. Volunteers backing the event are really optimistic and excited to see how the day unfolds.

Volunteer Nindy Devi said: "There are so many benefits in getting the community together and it includes everyone no matter what your background or age."

Please note that the event will be following a strict no alcohol policy due to the presence of children. All food donations to the table will be accepted however big or small. As the Big Lunch is taking place on Blackbird Leys field please also bring a picnic blanket or something to sit on if you wish to do so.

The Big Lunch is expected to be a great success and opportunity for the community of Blackbird Leys. We want everyone to feel welcome in our community!"

■ **If you would like to volunteer to take part or share something such as a talent during the Big Lunch please visit www.facebook.com/events/793117987410034/.**

■ **More details of the national Big Lunch are available via www.thebiglunch.com.**

Youth Housing Crisis

BY GEORGE SCOTLAND

ARE you a young person who dreams of owning your own home one day? You are not alone. In Britain today, an estimated 3.3 million young people aged 20–24 are currently still living at home, an increase of 25 percent since 1996 according to figures released last year by The Office for National Statistics.

What is stopping young people from fulfilling this aspiration of having sole ownership of a property?

In this country today, there is a considerable lack of affordable housing. As house prices soar with the average price of a house standing at £277,113 overall in the UK and semi detached properties in Oxford sold at a price of £459,778 with flats averaging at £266,710 the chances of the younger generation competing with other buyers is very slim.

Getting on the housing ladder in the first place is virtually impossible because the current economic climate is leaving them priced well out of the market.

In Oxfordshire, officials have warned that Oxford is in a "dire situation" and "desperately" needs more affordable housing. Despite the city's pressing need for new homes, figures from Oxford City Council reveal that not a single affordable home was built in 2013/14. Research in early 2015 by University of Oxford Geography Professor, Mr Danny Doring found that the city is the least affordable place to live in the country,even more so than London with the average price of a house going up by almost £38,000 over the last year.

So as young people face the reality of not being able to own their own home many are turning to private renting as an alternative option. This avenue however, is very expensive and not always obtainable due to deposits, references and high rent rates.

Applying for council and housing association accommodation is another option for young people. However, due to the limited amount of properties available, this is often not within reach as waiting lists are long and you are not guaranteed accommodation straight away.

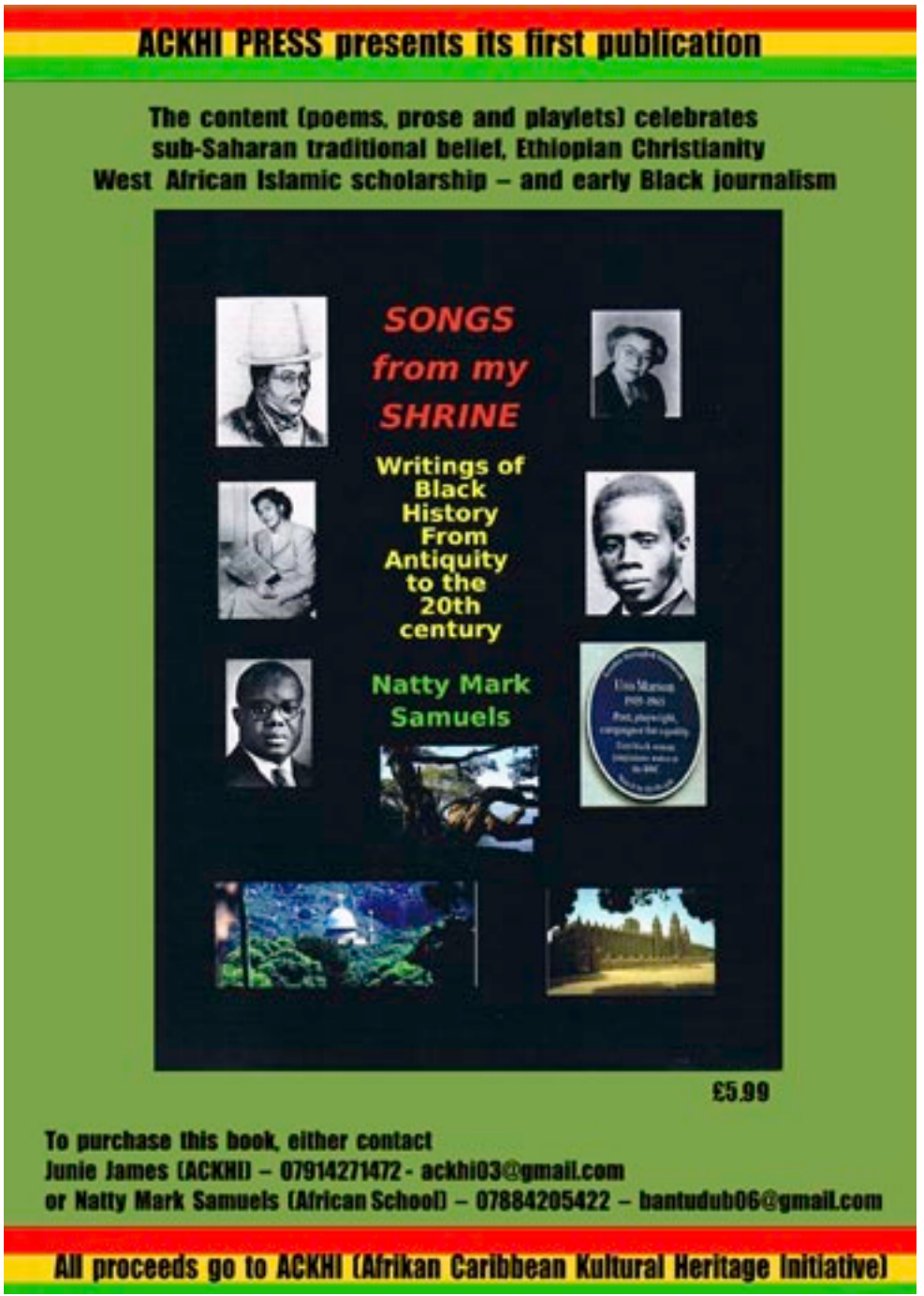
Another key factor in the housing crisis is that not enough houses are actually being built. This is evident with house building at its lowest level since the mid 1920's. As the population grows, houses need to be built to keep up with demand. A report in 2014 by the Strategic Market Housing Assessment (SMHA) estimated that at least 106,500 homes are needed to be built in Oxfordshire before the year 2031 to help keep up with local demand. The report went on to conclude that locally (Blackbird Leys area, Oxford District) 1,200–1,600 affordable homes were needed to be built every year from now until 2031.

The housing crisis has also contributed to record levels of youth homelessness. A report from UK national Charity, Crisis found that there was a strong correlation between a lack of adequate affordable housing and youth homelessness.

Earlier this year a report by a consortium of leading British charities claimed that the "housing crisis in the UK was in breach of a United Nations commitment on human rights."

The consortium called Just Fair made up of Crisis, Oxfam, Amnesty International, Save the Children UK and UNICEF UK concluded that the government is failing to meet UN standards as rental prices soar, living conditions are of an unsatisfactory level and rising levels of people are becoming homeless.

■ **Are you are young person looking to buy their first home or wanting to rent?**
Contact us and tell us your story: call 01865 711756 or email editor@leysnews.co.uk



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or email officemanager@leysnews.co.uk

Arts and culture

A night at the museum with Jane

LOCAL author and Leys News community journalist Jane Yates launched her fourth novel, The Garden, at a special steam punk event at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford.

Jane, who works at the museum, began writing four years ago after joining Leys News as a volunteer. Much of her writing is based on the Pitt Rivers Museum and Jane's books are extremely popular with fans across the world.

■ **You can find out more by visiting www.janeyates.co.uk**

DO YOU WANT TO BE A JOURNALIST AND WORK IN THE MEDIA?

Free training available now!

The Community Media Group offers free training to anyone who would like to work in the media.

We work with the National Council for the Training of Journalists to deliver the Certificate in Foundation Journalism.

Our training sessions take place every Wednesday from 10am to 1pm during term time only

For information and to register email **editor@leysnews.co.uk**

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Community Mosaic

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Course Dates:
Fri 5 June – Fri 10 July
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FREE

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9.30am–12.30pm on 12, 19 and 26 June.

Venue:
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Greater Leys
Oxford OX4 7FX

To enrol contact Emma Carney:
07770 641359
ecarney@wea.org.uk

COME and enjoy being part of a team. Learn the art of mosaic making to a high standard. Learn the skills of cutting and shaping tiles, laying patterns, planning design and colour.

This is a community mosaic course to produce a well designed and constructed mosaic panel for The Barn in Greater Leys. The community project is funded by Oxford City Council and the WEA and involves local people.

If you join this course, you are making a work of art that will be displayed permanently at The Barn in Greater Leys. What a sense of achievement you will feel!

This course is for beginners and for those who are experienced in mosaic.

This is for any adult over 19 years of age.

matrix

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The WEA is committed to equality of opportunity and inclusive learning.

Registered address: Workers' Educational Association, 4 Luke Street, London EC2A 4XW www.wea.org.uk

Adler Legacy

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Father's Day COMPETITION

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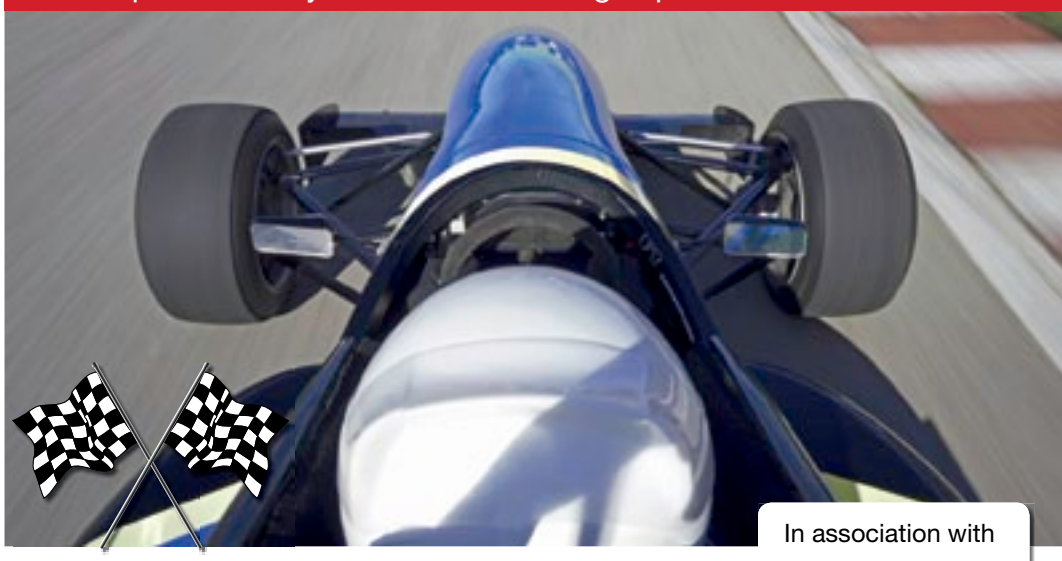

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In support of Sobell House Hospice

Leys WI French Evening

THE Leys WI is hosting a French dance and food evening on Wednesday 1 July at the Clockhouse from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. There will be live music with tuition in Breton and French traditional dancing plus food and wine.

■ **For more information contact Sue on 07786 158229 or Jenny on 01865 776777**

The Leys Resident Group

DO YOU have a problem, an idea or suggestion about how to improve the life you live in the Blackbird and Greater Leys?

If so, there is a chance for local people to be part of a powerful community voice dedicated to giving tenants and homeowners a better and brighter future. The more people the group gets, the more powerful voice it will have.

For more information and to get involved, meet at the Community Centre on Thursday 4 June at 7pm for some free food and a chat.

■ **For more information, please contact Milly on 07733 301256**

Free shopping bus!

DID you know there is a FREE bus to Tesco every Thursday? Every Thursday at 10.15am a coach from outside the Blackbird Leys Community Centre will take you to Tesco free of charge. You will also be collected at 12pm from Tesco for a return journey.

■ **For more information, please contact Milly on 07733301256 or mmacpherson@oxford.gov.uk**

DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS

Stella Gathenya continues her column contrasting the differences between living here in the UK with life in her native Africa.

Believe in yourself, child

THEY arrived at the primary school to find all of us students lined up like army men, singing and clapping for them like dignitaries. At least that is what they felt to us. For weeks on end we had been preparing for this particular day.

Our headteacher had told us that some journalists were coming to cover a story about how the donation we had received from a charitable organisation was being used. It was a fairly easy story to do – the head teacher had chosen a student they could talk to.

They were to be done by midday. As they were folding their equipment, we milled around the journalists and stared curiously at the cameras.

We whispered among each other. There was a mixture of childhood innocence and bashfulness in the air. They took more shots of our gleeful faces and of some children playing in the field and promised they would be back soon.

Just then, one of the pupils whispered to her friend, 'when I grow up I would like to be journalist.' Her friend burst out laughing and jokingly said, 'journalists have to be glamorous and wear pretty clothes and make up like the ones we see on T.V. Besides they are all beautiful.' 'Oh well, I will just have to try my best won't I,' she retorted. Then she ran and joined the rest who were playing nearby.

The journalists exchanged glances; one of them had a twinkle in their eyes. Next thing we know the aspiring journalist was being summoned to the big media offices in the capital city. She was the envy of all of us. The little girl from a tiny village will be rubbing shoulders with the high and mighty. People we only watched on telly reading the news and only dreamt of ever meeting them in person.

I do not think some of us believed they were real people, they probably thought they lived in those boxes. The journalists must have admired her tenacity, the fact that she did not let a sly remark bring her down. She did not let her background bring her down. They had invited her in order to give her a taste of what would become of her if she believed in herself.

Come Monday morning we all milled around the only television screen the school owned in anticipation of watching our fellow student.

They had recorded her doing a short news round. Oh, wasn't she breathtaking, she was articulate and brave. It took away the fact that her uniform was a little faded and her jumper had a few patches on it. It did not matter that she was not 'pretty' enough, whatever that meant. It was touching and motivating. It was about self image.

Everyone clapped in admiration. It had worked. Because this was about finding that inner thing that is so elusive, that we struggle with so much because of how people view us. It is about curbing those insecurities, about bringing those dreams back from where they went to hide.

This is the kind of advice I hope to pass to my children. I pray they have the kind of resilience the fellow student had. Not to compare themselves with others and second guess themselves. For them to yearn to be the best, to look in the mirror and despite the flaws still believe that the person staring back is a winner.

There is no clear-cut way to cushion your child from all the pressure of self-image, all one can do is choose the avenue one feels is best and run with it. I wish there were more people in society like those inspiring journalists.

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

Thanks to Oxford Brookes University for sponsoring this page. If you are interested in studying at Oxford Brookes please call Sobia Afridi on 01865 484826

Leys Learning

HOW TO SEW...

BY BECKY LEE

Little fabric houses

You will need:

- Fabric (scraps of fabric for window, door and roof)
- Scissors
- Thread
- Sewing machine
- Ruler/tape measure
- Pencil
- Paper
- Fabric marker
- Toy stuffing
- Needle
- Ribbon, Pom Pom trim, Ric-Rac etc.

Method:

On your paper measure out a house shape (*see picture*) measuring 6.5cm x 11.5cm for the house part and roof height of 5cm, cutting out a 1cm x 1cm square from each bottom corner of the house.

Then draw shapes, measuring out a 5cm x 13.5cm for the roof, 4.5cm x 4.5cm for the chimney, 3.5cm x 2.5cm for the window and 3.5cm x 4.5cm for the arched door. Once all drawn cut these out and place on to your desired fabric, cut each piece out.

Place the roof fabric on top of the trim right sides together, with the edge of the fabric 1/4" above the stitch line; sew along the stitch line.

Fold the roof fabric up and press. Trim the roof fabric to match the outline of the house.

Door, window and chimney:

If you have wonder web, iron this to the wrong side of the door and window and place on to your house. Then sew around the door.

Next sew around the window, making a cross in the centre – I went over mine twice as I liked the effect.

Sew on the small buttons for the door handle and flowers. I drew my flower stems on using fabric markers; if you do not have these you could embroider the stems.

Fold the chimney fabric in half, sew across the top and down one side, trim the seam allowances, turn right side out and press with the iron. Place the chimney upside down, right sides together, then fold a length of ribbon in half and place in the centre of the roof upside down and pin.

Place the front and back of your house right sides together and pin, sew around the bottom, sides and top of the house leaving a 1 – 1/2" turning hole on one side. DO NOT SEW the notched cutouts yet.

Pull each piece of the house apart, so that the seams meet up and the cutout flattens out. Sew across the straight edge, and repeat for the other side.

Turn the house right side out, stuff with toy stuffing and sew the hole closed with a ladder stitch.

GET THRIFTY: Kids' birthday parties on a budget

BY BETH SPEICH

WHATEVER happened to having a little home-based birthday party with good old-fashioned games?

My daughter turned six recently and wanted her party to be at home. I was over the moon. We don't have a big house, and I am not the most energetic and experienced party planner in the world, but this was certainly helpful in preventing the entire school year from being invited.

When I was young I always had my birthday parties at home – so did my siblings, and so did all our friends. Nowadays children are much more likely to have their parties away from home; soft play and leisure centres are very popular.

Now, I'm not totally opposed to this idea; I understand the benefits of parties like this – but if you want to save some cash, there's nothing wrong with hosting a party at home. Believe it or not, home based parties are relatively stress-free, and most importantly – fun.

You just need to plan in advance. You can find loads of inspiration online; it doesn't even need much creativity or imagination to be successful. On the entertainment front, instead of the expensive bouncy castle, magician, or any other party entertainer, consider some fun party games – they may be all you need besides food, a few decorations and party bags.

When I was young, a party was not a party without pass the parcel. Make sure you save some scraps of wrapping paper from your child's presents if they've already had them! Games like musical bumps (or statues, chairs, or cushions) cost you nothing. You probably have already got some sort of music player set up at home, and the kids love it. Even with the cost of a few prizes you will still be saving a fortune on hiring an entertainment package.

A game that will cost you less than £1 to run is The Chocolate Game. If you've not heard of it, search online; it's one of the best! And let's not forget Pin the Tail on the Donkey; a classic game that dates back to 1899.

You can use your imagination here to create your own variation if you are adopting a theme; my daughter played Pin the Bow on Hello Kitty for her Hello Kitty themed party last year and it went down a treat.

I'm sure you can also think of other fun things to do; perhaps you could set up a treasure hunt, open a beauty salon for nail treatments and hairstyling, or prepare some crafty activities like cake decorating.

And if it all gets a bit much, there's always sleeping lions!

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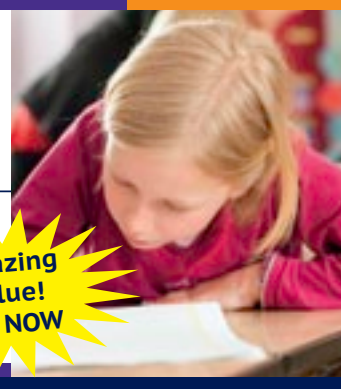

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Blackbird Leys Community Centre

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What's on in the Leys

A QUICK GUIDE TO WHAT'S AVAILABLE LOCALLY.

If you have a service or event you'd like to include, please ring 01865 711756

ADVICE

■ **Agnes Smith Advice Centre**
96 Blackbird Leys Road. Gives free independent and impartial debt advice and counselling.
Drop-in sessions: Mondays, 10am–12pm and Fridays, 10am–12pm.
Also in the Farmhouse,
Tues and Thurs, 10am–12pm.
☎ 01865 770206

■ **Young People's Jobshop**
Every Wednesday, 1.30–3pm at the Early Intervention Blackbird Leys Young People Centre. Ages 16–19.
Speak to an advisor for FREE one-to-one advice.

■ **Leys Job Club**
Free support for anyone who would like help with learning or training, or would like to consider a new job, or taking up work for the first time.
Sessions are held at the Youth and Community Centre every Wednesday from 10am–12pm. Just drop in.
Other job club sessions are held in the Children's Centre, please call for details.
☎ Call or text, 0793 1400 108

CHILDREN

■ **New Baby Group Inc. Breastfeeding Café**
Wednesdays, 1pm–2.30pm at Leys Children's Centre, Cuddesdon Corner.
☎ Contact Mikko Enticknap for Baby Group and Camille Kalaja for Breastfeeding Café
01865 773263

■ **Blackbird Leys Youth Centre**
Blackbird Leys Road. Variety of activities and advice for young people.
☎ 01865 772886.

■ **BLAP Afterschool Club**
Outdoor and indoor activities for yrs 8–13 in a structured environment.
3–5.30pm. £1.50 per session
☎ 07530933690 and 01865 236646
blap76@yahoo.co.uk

■ **Maluchy group**
For Polish speaking families with children ages 0–5 years. Second Saturday in the month, 10.15am–11.45am, at Children's Centre, Cuddesdon Corner, Cuddesdon Way.
☎ Agata, 07874 187 704

■ **Brownies**
Holy Family Church Hall.
☎ Jennifer Pleass, 07886 757338
bblbrownies@gmail.com

■ **35th Oxford Scout Group**
☎ Duncan Bowler,
0776 6293353
duncan@35thoxford.com

■ **Little Doves Stay & Play**
Thursdays (term time), 9am–12pm, at Dovecote Family Drop-in Room.

■ **Oxfordshire (The Rifles) Battalion Army Cadet Force**
Thursdays, 7.30–9.30pm at Sandy Lane West. Boys and girls ages 13 to 18.
☎ 01869 259681

■ **Mother and Toddler Bounce**
Trampoline Sessions suitable for mothers and toddlers held on Thursdays, 10.30–11.30am. Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre.
☎ Fiona, 07891 419793

■ **Strawbery Fayre Majorettes**
Training every Wednesday at the Barn in Nightingale Avenue, Greater Leys, 7.00–9.15pm.
☎ Eleen Filer, 01865 717781

Dovecote Afterschool Club
Runs Tuesday to Thursday, 3.30–5.15pm, £1.30 per session.
☎ 01865 712299
and 07974 234661

■ **Tiny Tots Majorettes**
(For ages 4–7yrs) At the Barn in Nightingale Avenue, Wednesdays, from 6–6.45pm. £3.
New members welcome.
☎ Eleen Filer, 01865 717781

■ **Teenage Rounders Class**
Tuesdays, 4–5pm
£1.20. For 14–18 year olds Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre

■ **Rainbows**
For girls aged 5–7 years.
Fridays during term time, 5.30–6.30pm, at the Holy Family Church Hall on Cuddesdon Way.
☎Alexandra, 07804 500313

■ **Air Cadets**
Mon and Wed, 7.30–9.30pm,
Sandy Lane West.
Boys and girls aged 12½ to 20 years.
☎ 01865 777055
oc.2210@aircadets.org

EDUCATION

Blackbird Leys Library
Cuddesdon Way.
Books, DVDs, audio books, use of computers for adults and children, photocopying etc.
Opening times:
Mon, Wed, Thur: 9am–12pm and 1.30–5pm
Tue: 9am–12pm
Sat: 9.30am–12.30pm
Friday Closed.
☎ 01865 770403

■ **Able Centre**
Cuddesdon Way. Free courses in Maths and English.
☎ Nicky, 01865 728688

■ **Blitz IT Courses**
IT for beginners, internet, email, file management, PC maintenance & more.
☎ 01865 806453

LEISURE

■ **Irish dancing**
Sacred Heart Hall. Weds and Thurs, 5pm.

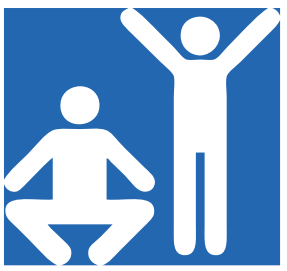
■ **Boxing Club**
Tuesdays: Juniors 7–8pm;
Seniors 8–9.30pm.
Thursdays: Seniors 8–9.30pm.
Fridays: Juniors 5–6pm.
Youth Centre, Blackbird Leys Rd.
☎ Tony Gibson, 01865 432995

■ **The Oxford Community Choir**
All welcome.
☎ Hannah, 07512 364367
hannahsings@gmail.com

■ **Blackbird Leys Bowls Club**
Cuddesdon Way. The Club is looking for new members. Open night every Thursday from 6pm.
☎ David Buckwell, 01865 881735
or Gordon Roper, 01865 361047

■ **Girls Football (15+)**
Mondays, 6.30pm. FREE.
☎ Marc Fleckney, 07920 463623
Mafleckney@gmail.com

■ **Indoor Bowls Club**
Sandy Lane West. Club is looking for new members and invites men, women, boys and girls of all ages and abilities.
☎ 01865 775891
or email oxbowls1@yahoo.co.uk



Leys Pools and Leisure Centre

Opening Hours

Monday to Friday: 6am–10pm
Saturday: 6am–8pm
Sunday: 8am–8pm

Bank Holiday: 7am–8pm

Pegasus Road, Blackbird Leys, Oxford, OX4 6JL
☎ 0844 893 3222

OLDER PEOPLE

■ **Walking Football**
Oxford City FC, Saturdays, 10–11am. Waking football, does what is says on the tin! Football but no running allowed. £3.50.
Anna McKay, 01235 849403
annamckay@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

■ **Golden Circle**
☎ Mrs S Williams, 01865 770626
and 07748 999522

■ **Silver Circle**
☎ 435954

■ **Monday & Friday Lunch Club**
Frys Court, 2 Nightingale Avenue, OX4 7WJ.
☎ Anne Appleton, 422231

■ **Friendleys Coffee, Cake & Chat**
Wednesdays, 10.30am–1pm
Jack Argent Room, BBL Community Centre, £2
☎ 07810 047819

■ **Over 60s Bingo Club**
Wednesdays 1–3pm
Blackbird Leys Bowls Club
☎ David Stonehill 01865 777074
or Anne Ranger 01865 430504

The Clockhouse
see box on opposite page

WELLBEING

■ Skiptrix Fitness Class
Get fit, tone and lose weight.
Thursdays, 6.30–7.15pm at the Ark T Centre, Cowley.
Satudays, 10–10.45am at the Barn, BBLeys. £4 per class.
☎ Trish, 07957754355
trishwisdom@yahoo.co.uk

■ Yoga For All
Experienced Yoga teacher.
☎ Linda Highland, 01865 432570

■ ZUMBA Fitness Party
Tues, 6.30–7.30pm at The Oxford Academy School, Sandy Lane West.
☎ 07714 248177 zumbasarahoxford@gmail.com www.zumbasarahoxford.com

■ The Listening Centre
Counselling service based at Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre.
☎ 01865 794794

■ Oxfordshire Mind
Short courses, groups and other support are available for anyone with a mental health problem. To find out more drop in to the Cowley Wellbeing Centre in St James' Hall, 26 Between Towns Road.
☎ 01865 247788

■ Tai Chi & Qigong
Class every Thursday morning 9.45–10.45am. Ark T Centre, Crowell Road, Cowley. £5 and £6. First class half price.
☎ 07974185554

■ Rosewood Club for people with dementia
Open weekdays, 9.30am–3pm. Providing a stimulating, enjoyable and social day while your family carer gets a well-earned break. £12 per day all inclusive, plus a transport charge if used.
☎ To arrange an informal visit call Julie Perks 749349 or email rosewood@daybreak-oxford.org.uk

■ Survivors
Fridays and Saturdays, Blackbird Leys Community Centre, 9.30am–3pm.
A self-help group of people who use or have used Mental Health Services, working together to get support or to share experiences. Lunch available for £1.
☎ 07729 581975

NOTICES

Socialist Party Meeting
Last Tuesday of every month at Leys Links Centre, Blackbird Leys Road.
Starts 7.30pm
☎ 0208 9888777

The Leys WI
Meets the first Wednesday of each month, 7.30–9.30pm, at The Clockhouse.
☎ Sue, 07786158229
E: theleyswi@yahoo.co.uk

Leys Community Market

Held at the Barn at 11am to 2pm on the last Saturday of the month.

Next dates:
30 May
27 June

For more details or to book a place please contact leyscommunitymarket@yahoo.com or Christine, 07914 395619

The Clockhouse Community Centre

Our sessions are either low-cost or free, and all Leys over 50s are very welcome!

Welcome events for local over-50s.
New to the Leys CDI Clockhouse Project? Meet others at these FREE, friendly socials. For everyone aged 50 and over, living anywhere on the Leys. We run lots of great, low-cost activities.
Next Date: WELCOME CREAM TEA, Monday 29 June, 2–4pm (running as part of regular Monday social – see details below) Please tel: 01865 395908 for details or just turn up on the day.

Over-50s advice
FREE monthly, confidential, advice at the Clockhouse (benefits, debt, housing, consumer issues), with an adviser from Agnes Smith Advice Centre. Next one: Monday 29 June. Please book an appointment (tel: 395908): 10am–12pm, or DROP-IN: 12–12.30pm.

Monday tea-time social for over 50s
Tea-time social club for a friendly cup of tea and a chat. Scrabble and dominoes available if you feel like a game. Every Monday, 1.30 –3.30pm. £1. (Transport help available if you live on the Leys and have mobility difficulties. We can also offer someone to meet you, or come with you, on your first visit.)
Tel: 395908.

Age UK information drop-in.
Monthly Clockhouse sessions. Next one: Monday 29 June, 1.30–3.30pm. If you are over 50, or are supporting someone over 50, and need help, advice or information, please drop in for a chat with friendly, experienced Age UK community worker Sue Snelders.

Dance for over 50s
Move around the floor, dance seated, or just watch and enjoy! No partner or experience needed. Regular dances. Next ones at the Clockhouse: Monday 1 June, LINE DANCE, 11am–12pm, £2; and Monday 15 June, SAMBA DANCE. 11am–12pm, £2.
Also, joint seated/standing dance welcome event with Prime Time Over-50s group, at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre – DO THE CHARLSTON! Wednesday 17 June, 11am–12pm. £2. (Prime Time admission includes afternoon bingo – please bring packed lunch and stay!)

New! Healthy cookery on a budget for over 50s
FREE course for Leys residents any age over 50. Please tel: Leys CDI Clockhouse Project tel: 395908 for more details and to check if places still available.

Yoga for over 50s
Beginners welcome. Every Tuesday, 10–11am. Start any week. £2.

Singing for fun for over 50s.
Tuesdays, 1.30–3.30pm. This group is full. Call 395908 to go on the waiting list.

Crafts group for over 50s
Bring your own knitting, crochet, papercraft, or sewing and have a natter. Every Wednesday, 11am–12.30pm. £1.

Tai chi for over 50s
Seated/standing exercise to help you get more supple, and boost energy. Every Thursday morning, 10–11am. £2.

Gardening Club.
Monthly meeting of SLIGO (Senior Leys Independent Gardening Organisation). Adults of all ages welcome.
Next meeting: Thursday 4 June, visit to Oxford Botanic Gardens. Meet 10.30 am by main entrance of Botanic Gardens (off High Street, opposite Magdalen College). SLIGO members: £2. Non-SLIGO members welcome, concessionary entrance fee is £3.30 with ID. Tel: 395908.

Art group for over-50s.
Beginners welcome. Meets every other Thursday, 2-4 pm, at Pptters Court, Robin Place, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7FF. £1, includes art materials and refreshments. "Do your own thing" with watercolours, acrylics or sketching. Tel: 395908 to check June dates.

Computer courses for over-50s.
Learn at your own pace with the Clockhouse IT Project Group. Complete beginners welcome. £1 a session. You need to book. Tel: 07951149724 (Jimmy), or 07962887379 (Gerry).

Evening Socials.
Join Clockhouse Activity Nights Group! Adults of all ages welcome. £2. Next meeting: BINGO NIGHT on Wednesday 24 June, 7–9 pm. Tel: 01865 395908.

Community gardening for volunteers.
Adult volunteers of all ages needed, to help keep the Clockhouse garden looking beautiful in every season. Enjoy fresh air and good company, while doing something really positive for your local community. Tel: 395908.

Rosewood Club.
Fun, sociable and stimulating days for people with dementia, and a break for their carers. £12 a day includes a hot two-course meal, plus a transport charge if used. Open each weekday. Tel: 749349 or email: rosewood@daybreak-oxford.org.uk for more details or to book an initial visit.

Long Ground, Greater Leys, OX4 7FX (look for the clocks on the roof) **☎ 01865 395908 E: clockhousecdi@btconnect.com**

LOCAL CHURCHES

■ Church of the Holy Family
Eucharist: Each Sunday, 10am, with children's activities.
Timeout: Reflective worship. Most Sundays, 6.30pm.
Church Office Hour: Mondays (except bank holidays) at 6.30– 7.30pm. For enquiries, hall bookings, wedding arrangements.
☎ Revd Heather Carter, 01865 778728 and Rev Adam Stevenson, 01865 714163
www.holyfamilybbl.co.uk

■ Redeem Christian Church of God
Meets at theSacred Heart, Sawpit Road.
Sunday Service: 2.30–5pm
Bible study: Wednesdays: 6–8pm, except last Friday of month.
☎ 07825 679044 and 01865 766056
www.RCCGLighthouse.co.uk

■ Leys Community Church
Meets on Sunday, 11am at the Oxford Academy, Beecroft Room (includes special activities for children and young people).
☎ Andy and Nicci Longmore, 01865 779700,
www.leyscommunitychurch.org.uk

■ Chrisco Ministries
Meets at Jack Agent Room at the BBL Community Centre, Sundays, 11am–2pm
☎ 07533 845714 and 07737 564677

■ Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Balfour Road, Blackbird Leys.
Sunday Masses: 9.30am, with music and children's liturgy; and at 6pm.
☎ 01865 776903

■ Christian Harvest Ministries
Meets at the Jack Argent Room at BBL Community Centre, Sundays, 3–5.30pm.
☎ Rev Alice Kinyanjui, 01865 701129

■ Seventh Day Adventist Church
1A Chester St, off Iffley Road.
Saturday first service: 9.45–11am.
Second service: 11.15am–12.30pm.
www.freebible.org.uk

■ Mount Zion Ministries Oxford
Glow Hall, Blackbird Leys Community Centre.
Sunday Service: 11am–1.30pm.
All night prayers: Fridays, 7–9pm.
Bible Study: Sundays, 11am–12pm.
☎ Rev Chris Ugwu, 07877 536406, 07932 964056 and 07877 054600
Email: mtzionoxford@yahoo.co.uk
www.mtzionox.org

■ Kingsway International Christian Centre (Oxford branch)
Sunday service: 11am–1pm, children's church runs concurrently.
Friday Prayer Meeting: 6–7pm.
The Barn, Nightingale Avenue, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BU.
☎ 07951262426
admin@kiccoxford.org.uk
www.kiccoxford.org.uk

YOUR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

■ PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Gordon Roper. **Vice Chair:** Mrs Ann Booker.
Non-position holders: Chris Hatton, Daniel Jones, Jadine-Francis Kennedy, Mrs Sheila Smith, Pat Stannard.

For further details telephone 07754 271831 (9am–5pm, Monday to Friday).
Email bblparishcouncil@gmail.com

Also check leysonline.net to find out about Parish Council Meetings.

■ OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

BLACKBIRD LEYS WARD
Linda Smith – *Labour.* 125 Oxford Road, Old Marston, Oxford, OX3 0RB
☎ 07961 121704 **E:** cllrlsmith@oxford.gov.uk
Rae Humberstone – Labour. 75 Little Bury, Greater Leys, Oxford, OX4 7UZ
☎ 01865 779678 Mobile: 07768 429566
E: cllrrhumberstone@oxford.gov.uk

NORTHFIELD BROOK WARD
Sian Taylor – *Labour.* 5 Regent Street, Oxford, OX4 1QU
☎ 07767 311425 **E:** cllrstaylor@oxford.gov.uk
Scott Seamons – *Labour.* 24 Partridge Walk, Greater Leys, Oxford, OX4 7BZ
☎ 01865 802350 **E:** cllrsseamons@oxford.gov.uk

■ OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

LEYS DIVISION
Steve Curran – *Labour.* 88 Fairacres Road, Oxford, OX4 1TG
☎ 01865 727824 Mobile: 07941 785538
E: stephen.curran@oxfordshire.gov.uk

■ MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

■ Andrew Smith —*Labour.* Unit A, Bishops Mews, Transport Way, Oxford.
☎ 01865 595790 **E:** andrewsmith.mp@virgin.net
Surgery: Every third Friday at the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre from 3pm.

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Win for Blackbirds Under 10's

ABOVE: Sponsor Matthew Bowles, of White Magic Sound with his son and captain Alfie Bowles

TEAM PHOTO:
***Back row, left to right*: Manager Stuart Parsons, Garrincha Da Costa, Leo Bloomfield, Leoche Mangala, Nathan Loveridge, Bobbi Moore, Jeuel Harris, Jack Jennings.**
***Front row, left to right*: Criston Debanks-O'Callaghan, Kieren Slattery, Jamie Slattery, Alfie Bowles, Bradley Boaden, Connor Brennan, Ben Bruno.**

OXFORD Blackbirds Under 10's were proud to wear their new kit sponsored by The Hungry Horse @ The Bullnose in their B League Spring Trophy Event Final, which they won 4–3 on penalties.

Goals from Bradley Boaden (2) and Ben Bruno had put Oxford Blackbirds into a 3–1 lead only for Kirtlington to level in normal time. Kirtlington took the lead in the first half of extra time but Blackbirds battled until the end and Criston Debanks-O'Callaghan equalised for Blackbirds with three seconds to go until the end of the second period of extra time. With one penalty saved by captain and keeper Alfie Bowles and Kirtlington's keeper putting the ball over the bar, conversions for Connor Brennan, Debanks O'Callaghan, Ben Bruno and Jeuel Harris were enough to grab Oxford Blackbirds the win, winning their fourth trophy event in two years.

"I am so proud of the boys and their achievements over the last two years. This was a very tense final. The boys dug in and showed a great amount of determination which proved to the boys to never give up and you may reap the rewards" said manager Stuart Parsons. "It was great for Jason to agree to get our shirts early and we really appreciate him getting us the sponsorship from The Hungry Horse again. It's great that the chain is investing in the community. Matthew Bowles, a local DJ aka White Magic Sound has also agreed to sponsor us again for our training gear and WJ Contractors also re-sponsored earlier in the year. I really appreciate all of the local people who have sponsored us as it is a great help."

Blackbirds mean business

OXFORD Blackbirds Under 18's travelled to Hook Norton to play a match that would decide who won the league.

Blackbirds meant business and forced themselves in front after just ten minutes when a corner taken by Toby Smith was met superbly by Connor Foley.

Blackbirds continued to pile on the pressure and 15 minutes later Marcus Judd went on a great solo run and as he entered the box he was brought down and awarded a penalty, which he coolly slotted past the keeper. Yasine Lamzini made it three just before half time with a quality individual goal.

Early in the second half Blackbirds' goalkeeper, Sam Jeffery was sent off for a foul on Gary Evans. Evans scored from the resulting spot kick to reduce his side's deficit and make it 3–1.

Blackbirds continued to look the better side, even with ten men. Despite pushing for more goals Blackbirds couldn't score and the game ended 3–1 and Blackbirds clinched the title with a game to spare.

The Under 14's extended their unbeaten run to three games after out classing promotion chasing Abingdon Youth. A long range missile from Joao Sarmento opened the flood gates in the first half, leading to the Blackbirds bombarding the Abingdon goalkeeper.

With Henreqaie Geuvera-Gois scoring directly from a corner and Jacob Bolger topping off a personal outstanding performance by heading in from a set piece Blackbirds went in front at half time.

With Abingdon wanting to secure promotion they applied more pressure in the second half, forcing some outstanding saves from goalkeeper Joe Gaul and a solid defensive performance from the defensive line.

Heath Cockburn dampened the Abingdon promotion party by hitting a wonder volley into the top corner and finally combining with Kye Winstone before calmly slotting the ball in the back of the net, securing the victory.

The Under 11's unfortunately missed out on promotion, for a second time, when Didcot Town White and Summertown Spartans won their final games to knock the Blackbirds off of the top spot and finish first and second respectively, leaving Blackbirds to finish second.

The Under 11's are currently looking for an assistant manager for the 2015–16 season. They are also looking to recruit new players for next season's squad. For more information please contact Aaron on 07582 780658.

■ Oxford Blackbirds are currently recruiting players, managers, coaches, assistant managers and committee members for the club. For more information please email oxfordblackbirds@yahoo.co.uk

OXFORD WHEELS OF GORY ROLLER DERBY

OXFORD Wheels of Gory has had a busy month with the club's second new skater intake. The first, in January, filled up so fast that the club had to start a waiting list.

Roller Derby is a fast-paced, full contact sport played on quad rollerskates. Oxford Wheels of Gory is an all-inclusive team of girls and guys aged 18 and over.

New skaters, affectionately known as Fresh Meat, are welcomed onto the team on a six week course.

Once they have mastered the basics of skating, and of the game, they join the main team practices to fine tune their skills.

Halo Jones from the club said: "Once signed up, new players will be put in touch with our Fresh Meat Liaison person, Fun Size Fury. She'll take all the details of any kit players need to borrow – don't worry, we have kit to fit all shapes and sizes! She will also quell all your fears about being on wheels.

Over six weeks, our coaches and off-skates wise owls will help you take your first tentative glides, or recall those hazy days of youth on your yellow Fisher Price skates. You will be introduced to all the skills you'll need to

be confident and competent on eight wheels. Everyone is encouraged to learn at their own pace, with most people surprising themselves with their progress. After joining main practice, newer skaters find themselves actively encouraged and supported by the rest of the team."

Halo added: "Roller Derby isn't just about skating, don't get me wrong, it's a pretty big part of it, but it's more than that.

"The Roller Derby community is worldwide, and becoming part of it allows you to join one of the friendliest and fastest-growing grass-roots sporting communities in the UK.

"On a local level, we train, live and work in Oxfordshire and we support local charities through fundraising and volunteering. For example, this May we are skating a marathon and raising money for Oxfordshire MIND."

■ If you'd like to join, keep a look out for the next intake at www.oxfordwheelofgory.co.uk.

■ If you'd like to sponsor the skaters for the skate marathon you can donate at: www.justgiving.com/OWGskatemarathon/ or text OWGR99 and the amount to 70070.